



The Sarajevo Sentinel

A newsletter for American citizens living, working, and visiting Bosnia and Herzegovina

Produced by the Consular Section of U.S. Embassy Sarajevo

SPRING 2011

U.S. Embassy Sarajevo

1 Robert C. Frasure

71000 Sarajevo

(387) 33 704 000

(387) 33 221 837 FAX

For after-hour emergencies, please call the Embassy switchboard.

For all telephone inquiries, please call us Monday through Friday between 3:30 and 4:30 p.m.

American Citizen Services

Business Hours:

Monday through Friday from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.;

Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:00 to 11:30 a.m.

**We can provide better service if you make an appointment at*

<http://sarajevo.usembassy.gov/service.html>

ACS e-mail: rws@state.gov

Non-Immigrant Visa Hours:

By appointment only.

Call Visa Information Service:

(387) 33 295 375

Immigrant Visa Hours:

By appointment only.

IVConsularSarajevo@state.gov

The Embassy will be closed:

April 25–Easter Monday (BIH)

May 2 and 3 – Labor Day (BIH)

2011 EMBASSY HOLIDAYS

For a complete list of this year's holidays, please follow this link.

<http://sarajevo.usembassy.gov/holidays.html>

Overseas Taxpayers Can Use IRS Free File To Prepare And E-FILE Tax Returns

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) advises that U.S. citizens and resident aliens living outside the United States can use IRS Free File to prepare and file their federal tax returns electronically.

IRS Free File is brand-name software that is offered exclusively at IRS.gov, through a partnership with the tax software industry.

There are five companies that accept foreign addresses.

Taxpayers should review the list of tax forms supported by the company to ensure it meets their needs, especially Form 1116, Foreign Tax Credit, and/or Form 2555, Foreign Earned Income.

To be eligible, taxpayers' adjusted gross income in 2010 must be \$58,000 or less. Some overseas taxpayers may exclude \$91,500 of their 2010 foreign earnings, which would make more people eligible for IRS Free File.

Free File software generally asks questions and taxpayers supply the answers. The software completes the proper tax forms, does the math, and allows for free electronic filing through IRS e-file.

By filing electronically, taxpayers due refunds and who have U.S. bank accounts can opt for direct

deposit and get their refunds in as few as 10 days.

To get started with IRS Free File, go to www.irs.gov/freefile and select "Pick a FreeFile Company."

Taxpayers with an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) over \$58,000 can efile their returns by purchasing online software. Check the software provider's information to ensure that it can accommodate a foreign address.

Call for Embassy Wardens!



The Embassy would like to identify new wardens and confirm the names and contact information of wardens designated over the past several years. We need reliable wardens who can reach U.S. citizens in the event of an emergency, disaster or threat and to distribute other information of interest to the private U.S. community. The warden's role is vital to the U.S. Embassy, especially in times of crisis when the Embassy needs to reach Americans residing in BiH in the shortest possible time, particularly if e-mail is down. Moreover, we need volunteers who are willing to assume responsibility for geographic areas in which they

and their fellow Americans are residing.

If you would like to volunteer for this important security role, please send us your contact information (e-mail, home phone, work phone, cell phone). If you are already an Embassy warden, please reconfirm your participation and provide any changes in your contact information. We can be reached at rws@state.gov.

ASK THE CONSUL

Have a question about what we do?

Please email us to rsw@state.gov and you may see your question in the next issue of the Sentinel

The New e-CRBA

The Department introduced a redesigned Consular Report of Birth Abroad (FS-240) in January 2011. The new design has state-of-the-art security features to help prevent fraud and identity theft. The FS-240 is an official record confirming that a child born abroad to a U.S. citizen parent or parents acquired U.S. citizenship at birth and serves as proof of citizenship.



How To Replace a Consular Report of Birth Abroad

You Must Submit:

1. A notarized written (or typed) request that includes all of the following information:
 - Full name of the child at birth
 - Any adoptive names of child
 - Child's date and place of birth
 - Any passport information
 - Full name of parents
 - If known, the serial number of the FS-240
 - Signature of requester
 - Legal Guardian(s) Only: A copy of the court order granting guardianship
2. A copy of requester's valid ID
3. A \$50.00 check or money order Make payable to Department of State. The Department will assume no responsibility for cash lost in the mail.
4. Mail to:
Department of State
Passport Services
Vital Records Section
Room 510
1111 19th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Do I have to provide my Social Security Number when applying for a passport?



Failure to provide your Social Security Number may result in

significant processing delays and/or the denial of your application.

Section 6039E of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 6039E) requires you to provide your Social Security Number (SSN), if you have one, when you apply for a U.S. passport or renewal of a U.S. passport. If you have not been issued a SSN, enter zeros in box #5 of the passport application form you are completing. Contact the Social Security Administration to request a Number. If you are residing abroad, you must also provide the name of the foreign country in which you are residing.

The U.S. Department of State must provide your SSN and foreign residence information to the Department of Treasury. If you fail to provide the information, you are subject to a \$500 penalty enforced by the IRS. All questions on this matter should be directed to the nearest IRS office.

Notarial Services

Notarial services are available to all U.S. passport holders with documents destined for use in the United States. The individual who needs to sign the document must appear in person at Consular Section, present proper identification in the form of a government-issued document with photograph. If witnesses are required, you must bring your own; consular staff members are prohibited by regulations from acting as witnesses. Do not sign your document until requested to do so by the consular officer.

Please schedule an appointment for a [notarial service online](#).

Note: Consular officers are prohibited from offering legal advice on the form or content of documents to be notarized. Additionally, consuls are not authorized to certify true copies of academic credentials, college transcripts or diplomas.

The fee for any notarial service (one notarial seal) is US \$50.

Diversity Visa (DV) Lottery Fraud Alert

There are fraudulent e-mails from @usa.com concerning the 2011 Diversity Visa (DV) Lottery currently circulating. @usa.com is not an official State Department e-mail address. Starting May 1, 2011, successful applicants will be able to check their DV status through a web-based Entry Status Check at the E-DV website www.dvlottery.state.gov. Requests to pay any fees associated with the DV Lottery at locations other than the U.S. Embassy's Consular Section are absolutely fraudulent.

A New Tool To Help You Make Informed Decisions About Preventive Health

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services today unveiled an innovative new website to help parents and other consumers learn about the most effective way to protect themselves and their children from infectious diseases and learn about immunization.

[Vaccines.gov](#) brings together the best in federal resources on vaccine and immunizations to provide consumers with easy-to-understand health information specifically for their needs.

"[Vaccines.gov](#) puts the power of prevention at the fingertips of all Americans," said Dr. Howard K. Koh, HHS Assistant Secretary for Health. "We urge everyone to visit this site and learn more about how vaccines can protect the health of each family member as well as the entire Nation."

Vaccines.gov is the first cross-government website devoted to providing consumer information about vaccines and immunization, combining content and expertise from agencies across the Department. It is the result of unprecedented collaboration among federal health and communications experts to offer online content about vaccine and immunization based on consumer needs.

The site includes content about vaccine recommendations, the diseases that vaccines prevent, important information for getting vaccinated, and tips on travel health. It also links consumers with resources in their states to learn about vaccine requirements for school or child care entry and local community information.

"This website will help ensure that Americans have accurate, Web-based information on immunizations," said Dr. Bruce Gellin, director of the National Vaccine Program Office at HHS, which led the creation of Vaccines.gov. "It was developed

with significant consumer input based on the public's feedback and is remarkably easy to navigate. It is designed to answer consumers' questions, educate them about diseases that vaccines prevent, and connect Americans with resources to keep themselves and their families healthy."

In the coming year, [Vaccines.gov](#) will be expanded to include information from other government Departments, grow to include a Spanish version of the site, offer new content on vaccine recommendations and infectious disease outbreaks, and be continually tested to ensure [Vaccines.gov](#) addresses the needs and questions of consumers.

Traffic Safety And Road Conditions



While in Bosnia and Herzegovina, you may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States.

Road travel is possible throughout most of the country, but many roads are poorly maintained and sometimes blocked due to landslides, de-mining activity, and traffic accidents. Bosnia and Herzegovina has fewer than forty kilometers of four-lane highways. The existing two-lane roads between major cities are quite narrow at places, lack guardrails, and are full of curves. Travel by

road can be risky due to poorly maintained roads and morning and evening fog in the mountains. Driving in winter is hazardous due to fog, snow and ice.

Local driving habits are poor, and many vehicles are in bad condition; approximately 105 motor vehicle accidents are reported daily throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many accidents occur when drivers exceed safe speeds along winding mountain roads. Accidents involving drunk driving are an increasing problem. Driving after dark is especially dangerous, and street lighting is not common outside major towns. Road construction may be poorly marked, and automobiles share the road with heavy vehicles and agricultural equipment. Travelers should try to convoy with other vehicles, if possible, and plan their trip to ensure they travel only during daylight hours.

Although the number of service stations outside major cities has increased in recent years, many do not offer mechanical or other services. The emergency number for vehicle assistance and towing service is 1282. Speed-limit signs are not always obvious or clear. The speed limit on the majority of roads is 60 km/h; on straight stretches of road it is generally 80 km/h. The use of seat belts is mandatory. Talking on a cell phone while driving is prohibited. The tolerated blood alcohol level is .03 percent. Bosnian law requires having a safety vest, spare tire, jack, first aid kit, safety triangle, towing rope, and spare light bulbs in the car at all times.

In order to drive legally in Bosnia and Herzegovina, you must have an international driving permit in addition to your U.S. license.

VOTING INFORMATION

Check www.fvap.gov for the latest information on voting.

Drowsy Driving

Two out of every five drivers (41 percent) admit to having fallen asleep at the wheel at some point, with one in ten saying they've done so in the past year, according to a new AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety study. More than a quarter of those surveyed admitted they drove despite being so tired that they had difficulty keeping their eyes open in the previous month. In an effort to reduce this alarming trend in traffic safety, the Mid-Atlantic Foundation for Safety and Education presents Fatigued Driving programs to motorists throughout the AAA Mid-Atlantic service area.



To remain alert and avoid drowsiness, AAA suggests:

- Getting plenty of sleep (at least six hours) the night before a long trip
- Traveling at times when you are normally awake, and staying overnight rather than driving straight through
- Scheduling a break every two hours or every 100 miles
- Stop driving if you become sleepy; someone who is tired could fall asleep at any time - fatigue impacts reaction time, judgment and vision, causing people who are very sleepy to behave in similar ways to those who are drunk
- Not planning to work all day and then drive all night
- Drink a caffeinated beverage. Since it takes about 30 minutes for caffeine to enter the bloodstream, find a safe place to take a 20-30 minute nap while you're waiting for the caffeine to take effect
- Avoid sleepy times of day. Take a mid-afternoon nap and find a place to sleep between midnight and 6 a.m.
- Traveling with an awake passenger

Symptoms of sleepiness include but are not limited to:

- Having trouble keeping your eyes open and focused
- The inability to keep your head up
- Daydreaming or having wandering, disconnected thoughts
- Drifting from your lane or off the road, or tailgating
- Yawning frequently or rubbing your eyes repeatedly
- Missing signs or driving past your intended exit
- Feeling irritable and restless
- Being unable to remember how far you have traveled or what you have recently passed

Green market prices through SMS

For the first time in Bosnia-Herzegovina, daily wholesale prices of fresh fruits and vegetables are available through a simple SMS. USAID and the Norwegian government have helped make this possible by supporting AgroLink to provide this information. AgroLink is an agricultural e-BIZ Center, and part of USAID's and Norway's Excellence in Innovation Project. AgroLink makes price information available for five wholesale markets: Sarajevo, Capljina, Arizona Market, Banja Luka and Bijeljina.

Customers simply send an SMS with the key word for the product (i.e. BAN for banana) to the number **091 41 5 900** and within a few seconds they receive an SMS with the current minimum and maximum prices for the product they selected. This SMS service target customers who do not have an internet connection, which includes many farmers in rural areas of BiH. Customers who do have internet access can also obtain market information from the website - Agrolink.



Market price information helps producers and traders in the agriculture value chain make informed decisions that promote efficient production and trade. It is especially valuable for

producers that sell in local and regional markets. Such crucial information helps these producers negotiate with traders and determine when and where to sell their crops.

Based in Banja Luka, AgroLink is a private company that offers a number of services for the agricultural industry. AgroLink provides information on grants and tenders from donors and government agencies, information on standards, agricultural policies of various government agencies in BiH, as well as information on fairs and educational events.

The goal of the Excellence in Innovation (EI) project is to strengthen both BiH ICT and non-ICT companies' competitive positions through their ability to offer new, high value-added products and services that are in demand in the domestic and global markets. The EI Project supports machine tool, wood processing, agribusiness, tourism, apparel/textile/leather industry, logistic/supply chain management and supporting sectors.

Sign up for SMS Security Alerts

In case of an urgent security alert, the Embassy can notify you by SMS text message. If you'd like to receive these messages, please email us your BiH cell phone number to rws@state.gov subject line "Add me to SMS"

Peace Corps 50th Anniversary 1961 – 2011



This year, the Peace Corps will commemorate 50 years of promoting peace and friendship around the world. The Peace Corps is an independent U.S. government agency, established by executive order 10924 of President John F. Kennedy on March 1, 1961, that provides volunteers for countries requesting assistance around the world. Back in 1960, then Senator John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. From that inspiration grew an agency of the federal government devoted to world peace and friendship. Since that time, 200,000+ Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 139 host countries to work on issues ranging from AIDS education to information technology and environmental preservation. To learn more about the Peace Corps, please visit their web site (<http://www.peacecorps.gov>)